



## ***Too Loud A Solitude* adapted into a graphic novel**

TOO LOUD A SOLITUDE IS THE MOST FAMOUS WORK BY CZECH WRITER BOHUMIL HRABAL. IT HAS BEEN TRANSLATED INTO ELEVEN LANGUAGES AND HAS JUST BEEN ADAPTED AND PUBLISHED BY 6 PIEDS SOUS TERRE AS A GRAPHIC NOVEL, CO-SIGNED BY ARTIST AMBRE, SCRIPTWRITER LIONEL TRAN AND PHOTOGRAPHER VALÉRIE BERGE.

*Too Loud A Solitude* tells the tragic destiny of a Prague worker whose job is to pulp books.

For thirty-five years, Hanta, an illiterate and alcoholic worker has been destroying books day in, day out. He has fallen madly in love with the works he is supposed to eliminate. He saves as many as he can and hoards them up in his apartment.



One day, his boss takes him to visit a modern recycling plant and tells him he is to be made redundant. Hanta's world collapses. Having become useless, he ultimately revolts by refusing to lose the objects that give meaning to his life. The violence of the work – the themes of which are the decline of a culture based on books and the fall of the now obsolete working classes – is more than ever relevant to the age.





The graphic novel adaptation of *Too Loud A Solitude* is published with the agreement of The Estate of Bohumil Hrabal and Editions Robert Laffont.

## A provokingly fresh approach

Ambre and Lionel Tran have achieved a daring adaptation of Bohumil Hrabal's novel. They first went through documentation work for several years with photographer Valerie Berge. Starting from the script Valerie Berge made several series of photographs that gradually formed something like her own reading of the novel.

The plot was originally situated in Prague but it was given a new setting originating in pictures of working-class areas of Lyon. Ambre, the cartoonist, worked straight from Valerie Berge's photos, that he would enlarge and reframe before drawing them on this new basis. His style underwent radical changes to get close to what is usually obtained with copper-plate engraving.

*Too Loud A Solitude* deals with the motif of the obsolete. In his desire to convey a sense of reality Lionel Tran, the author of the adaptation, has worked in a printer's workshop, which enabled him to become imbued with the daily experience described by Hrabal.

"Hrabal basically wrote after his own experience. This was necessary to get close to and get immersed in the character's daily life." The man lending his own features to Hanta, the protagonist, spent his own youth working on the same machine as described in the book.



## A disturbingly intense work

Lionel Tran decided in favour of a realistic approach, to *Too Loud A Solitude*. “The novel consists in a monologue by a man whose life is actually very scarce. His life mostly takes place in a mindscape, made up of thoughts and reminiscences – hence the notion that the character’s flow of changing sensations is what should be represented.”

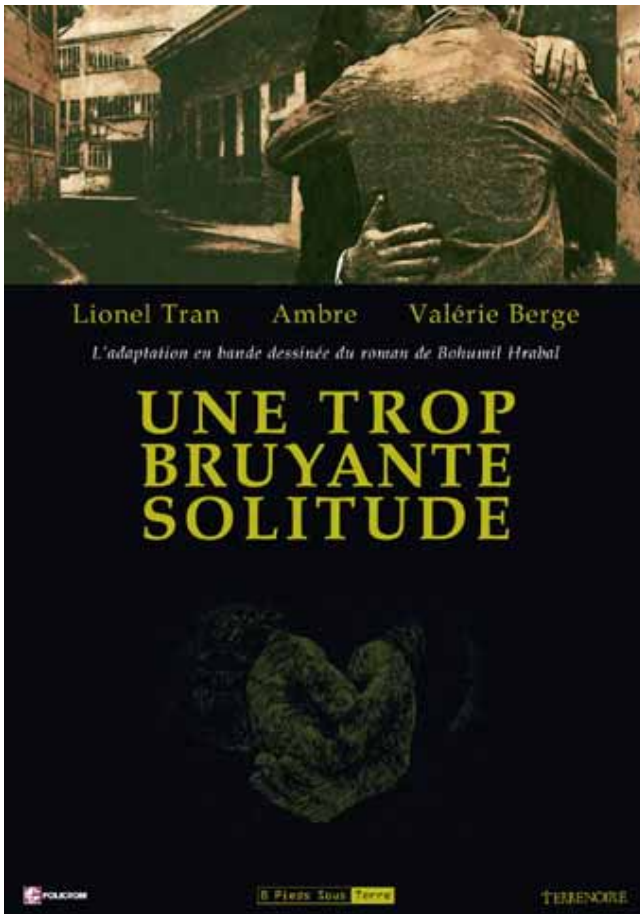
Ambre gave a stunning rendition of this approach. “With *Too Loud A Solitude* I attempted to do something quite realistic but that was meant to be a mental space as well. We are in Hanta’s mind and share his perceptions.”



So as to represent Hanta’s thoughts, Valerie Berge looked for places with a high emotional charge. “My desire was that each photo should be laden with memories, either personal or collective, having to do with a sense of loss.



# An outstanding literary adaptation



After working from extremely rich and varied material, Ambre, Lionel Tran and Valerie Berge have come up with a graphic novel that comes extremely close to the original. “Our main preoccupation was to **translate** the atmosphere of the novel and not to illustrate it.” The book follows the same dramatic progression as the novel. “*Too Loud A Solitude* is a deconstructed monologue, bifurcating towards a memory, turning back on itself. We did all we could to convey and translate this impression with the medium of the Comic book.

## Book specifications :

Format 24 x 30 - 80 pages | 20 Euros ISBN 2-910431-38-X

Date of publication : 15 January 2003

Contact : [www.pastis.org/jade](http://www.pastis.org/jade)







## About the exhibition inspired by the adaptation of *Too Loud A Solitude*

IN THE WAKE OF HIS RECENT ADAPTATION IN COMIC FORM, THIS AMBITIOUS EXHIBITION BASED ON THE GREAT WORK OF THE CZECH WRITER **BOHUMIL HRABAL**, INCLUDES DRAWINGS, TEXTS, PHOTOGRAPHS AND NEW MEDIA.

The exhibition/installation covers 200 square metres and was created at the Centre National de la Bande Dessinée et de l'Image during the 30th International Comix Festival of Angoulême in January 2003.

Conceived as an extension of the multidisciplinary album by Ambre, Tran and Berge, it takes the form of a creative experiment which explores the notion of artistic overlapping, mixing texts, drawings and photos.

Over a hundred original pages and photographic prints are displayed in a "cemetery" of thousands of books (a symbolic recreation of the pulping machine, a taboo and mythical place, the central element of Hrabal's book), with in counterpoint the contribution of modern media (projections and electronic sound creations).

Visitors will be literally plunged into Hanta's mental universe, and invited to explore the intense vertigo in the heart and work of the Czech writer and its bold adaptation to comics.

EXHIBITION : *Too Loud A Solitude*  
From 23rd January to April 21<sup>th</sup> 2003  
Location : CNBDI, 121 rue de Bordeaux, 16000 Angoulême – Tel : 33 (0)5 45 38 65 65.  
Person in charge :  
Olivier Roche – Tel : 33 (0)6 62 02 15 31.  
e-mail : [terrenoire@chez.com](mailto:terrenoire@chez.com)  
Scenography : Lionel, Tran and Eric Terrier.

*“It is a very paradoxical form of fetishism that has grown from and around our book culture. Under the pretence of protecting the book, the latter is often made impossible to access – to express our love for the book, we often had to mutilate it. The exhibition that comes with the book *Too Loud A Solitude* consists of a graveyard of books : but all this accumulation is a trick of the eye for the books are hollow and emptied-out.*

*We took “real” books that we gutted out, from which the pages were torn, or cut away with cutthroat razors. The spectator thinks he or she is faced with a crushing amount of books, an impossible sum of knowledge. In fact there is a lot of ambiguity in this installation which both means : the book culture has to be defended because it is mortal, and, at the same time, this culture has already vanished, unawares.*

*Don’t say this is an act of faith for culture, an autodafé in others words, because many books have been maimed, disfigured, defaced and injured during the process and, besides, they have all been made fire-resistant.”*

Lionel Tran

